

OTHER NOTICES

Elsas, M. J. *Housing before the War and After.* London, 1945. Staples Press Ltd. Pp. xi + 95. Price 7s. 6d.

THIS second edition contains two new chapters comprising an estimate of the number of houses required after the war, and a plan for rent subsidies,

Chapter VI hardly lives up to the author's promise, in his preface, of "an attempt to ascertain the housing needs of various sections of the population." Dr. Elsas quite rightly stresses the shortage of accommodation for old people and, on page 68, the desirability of building on new estates for the requirements of a balanced population. The gross estimate of future housing needs over the next twenty years confirms the admitted magnitude of the task but does not assist in determining the relative proportions of different sized dwellings required.

Chapter VII describes a new plan for rent subsidies calculated upon a national basis and upon the principle of paying the subsidy direct to the tenant. The effect of building costs upon the amount of subsidy needed to bridge the gap between ability to pay and the economic rent requires to be taken into account in determining the "standard rents" referred to on page 81, and may raise practical difficulties in the administration of such a method as is described.

H. F. C.

Glover, Edward. *The Psycho-Pathology of Prostitution.* London, 1945. Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency. Pp. 16. Price 1s.

THIS excellent pamphlet is the text of a paper read before an international meeting convened by the Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children.

Dr. Glover argues that objectivity is extremely difficult in dealing with prostitution, since unconscious drives operate more strongly in investigators, as well as their audience, than they do in such a subject, for instance, as chemistry. Nevertheless, inquiry is vital, though it is well to remember that modern psycho-analytical knowledge is comparable to the state of "organic medicine when Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood." He offers a useful warning about unfamiliar psychological terms. "We talk loosely of repression, for example, as if it were a disease or a bad policy, whereas in fact repression is a normal unconscious mechanism without which we could not function adequately. It is not repression that is pathological but the results of 'faulty repression.' You can well imagine the confusion that

would have arisen if early anatomists discovering the liver had assumed it to be a malignant tumour."

Beginning with a brief but beautifully clear exposition of Freud's theory of infantile sexuality, Dr. Glover points out that what are called "normal" reactions can become regressive, regression being invariably encountered in a study of "perverted" sexual impulses. He regards juvenile delinquency as a "most fruitful field and the most convenient for investigating early forms of prostitution," and gives lack of reliable and friendly instruction as a definite contributory cause in children's "sexual aberrations," adding the thought-provoking comment that "in the whole field of delinquency, including sexual misdemeanours, it is too readily taken for granted that economic factors are the prime cause of anti-social conduct." He has some trenchant comments on "tolerated prostitution," which, he says, "gives social sanction to a pathological condition." Compulsory prostitution, too, constitutes "a betrayal of every principle that makes for stability in human society."

Dr. Glover ends with these very wise observations on the question of responsibility. "The expert witness is, no doubt, useful as an assessor. But his authority runs no further. Like a dictionary . . . the psychological expert is very handy to refer to, provided he is put back on the shelf when his purpose has been served. It is no part of the psychologist's duty to grasp at administrative dictatorship. As a private citizen he may think what he likes about subjects like prostitution, but the ultimate responsibility for dealing with this problem lies in the social conscience of the community at large."

W. H.

James, L. *A Forgotten Genius: Sewell of St. Columba's and Radley.* London, 1945. Faber. Pp. xix + 314. Price 21s.

I THINK genius is rather too weighty a term to apply to William Sewell. He was Subwarden of Exeter College, Oxford, of the High Church party, and held that the Church alone had the right and power to educate. To carry out these views he was a leading promoter of St. Columba's College in Ireland and later of Radley. He tried to found these schools on the plan of an Oxford College. When difficulties arose at Radley, he volunteered himself as Warden and carried on for eight years. His ideas were extravagant; such mundane affairs as £ s. d. did not enter into his cognisance, and he left when the College had incurred a debt amounting to £40,000. It was rescued from bankruptcy by the public spirit of a business man, John Gelli-grand Hubbard, who believed in the school.

Sewell's methods were thereafter much modified.

From the educational point of view, how far was he successful? If one takes as success, obituaries in *The Times*, and, after all, these are to a large extent hall-marks of useful lives, Radley hardly compares in numbers with other schools started about the same period, Marlborough for instance, to which many sons of Church of England parsons go. One might compare Glenalmond in Scotland, a school founded on similar lines to Radley, though Sewell had no responsibility for its foundation. It is strictly denominational, of the Scottish Episcopal Church. But I think by this test it hardly compares with Fettes, where the religious teaching is wide enough to embrace both Presbyterians and Episcopalians. (One enthusiastic German theologian called such teaching "Vish Vash.")

This test may be looked upon as too material. It has been said "A carriage and £5,000 a year is not the summit of the reward nor the end of God's judgment of men!" No doubt. But none of us, be we Churchmen or otherwise, are competent to sit on such tribunals.

To get to eugenics, Sewell was a firm believer in heredity, and his own family is one of distinct interest. He was one of a family of twelve children, six brothers and six sisters, three of whom lived to be over 90. Four brothers and one sister appear in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. His father and mother were first cousins, their mothers being sisters called Clarke. His father, Thomas Sewell, was a solicitor of standing in the Isle of Wight. His grandfather was a Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford. Like himself, his father and grandfather appear to have been devoid of "money sense." The more remote Sewell ancestors appear to have been "statesmen" in Westmorland.

B. S. BRAMWELL.

Paterson, Dorothy. *The Family Woman and the Feminist: A Challenge*. London, 1945. Wm. Heinemann. Pp. x + 150. Price 2s. 6d.

THIS little book is inspired by a fine ideal, but marred by an electioneering spirit. Not only is everything "the fault of Woman, for she is the Mother of Man," not only is "modern woman" said "to jeer at the courtesies" of men, but in order "to be logical, then she must also seek entry into the world of miners, stokers, road-diggers and cattle ranchers"! The Feminist, with less justice than the Tory or the Socialist, is accused of every kind of crudity, incivility and absurdity, and all in order to exalt the Mother of

the Race. We also would like to see the importance and sanctity of Motherhood and true womanliness fully and universally recognized. It is true that "All normal women should realize that children are the nation's one indispensable heritage," and that "creating a family is the most important function of Woman in Society"; but let not the doors be closed to exceptional women who are able to undertake and fulfil other missions as well.

The great privilege of motherhood is not given to all women, and even to those who receive it, its duties cannot last for ever. Grandmothers at any rate have time for other things. But, in spite of its polemical manner, this little book should perform a service to the overworked woman (it will not take her long to read) by assuring her of the recognition of others in her unending endeavours; and it may make those others also appreciate the struggle and toil and deep unselfishness, as well as the abiding recompense, of "The Family Woman." Moreover, if such Feminists really exist, it may give them a wholesome feeling of discomfort!

U. G. D.

Webster, Hutton. *Taboo: A Sociological Study*. 1942. California, Stanford University Press. London, Oxford University Press. Pp. 378. Price 24s.

HUTTON WEBSTER'S new book should make a useful volume of reference. Following Frazer, he lists together the different forms of ritual prohibition which are found universally associated with physiological processes such as reproduction, sex, food and death, and those also associated with the unfamiliar and the sacred object. All such ritual prohibitions he groups under the common heading of "Taboo." The present book, however, brings Frazer up to date, since the author has combed through most of the recent ethnographical literature.

As a "Sociological Study" the work does not live up to its sub-title. Webster makes no examination of the main sociological theories accounting for the universal phenomenon of the taboo, such as those of Radcliffe Brown and other modern students of ritual; nor does he contribute any theoretical views of his own. The book is a collection of ritual prohibitions and nothing more. It will be useful to students and lecturers looking for material grouped under such headings as taboos connected with reproductive life, death and the dead, sacred things, and economic taboos. It will not contribute to our theories of the nature and function of ritual.

A. I. RICHARDS.